

www.savethewetlands.org

aesthetic constitution are essential to Native American communities. Building the SLT through this land would increase the noise and air pollution and degrade the land the Medicine Wheel is on—the SLT threatens the integrity and importance of this sacred space.

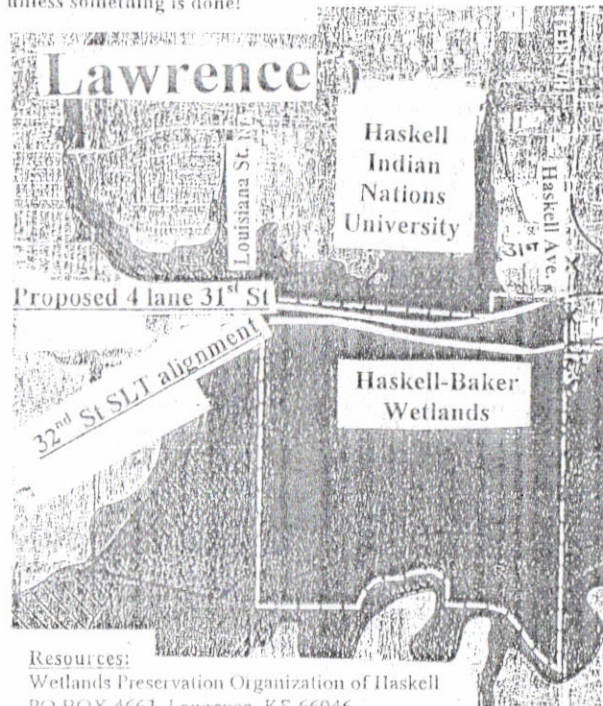
The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in their EIS did not consider the threat to Native American's religious rights and Haskell's educational programs until 1994 when a SEIS was demanded. But the SEIS did not show the importance that wetlands serve to students, alumni, and faculty of Haskell and other Native American communities who practice their ceremonies and find education in the wetlands.

Building the SLT through the wetlands is in the interest of development. It will not alleviate traffic on the overcrowded streets of Lawrence, but it will cause more traffic and sprawl. More roads will generate more travel as people take more car trips. Traffic on 23rd and Iowa St. will increase. Farmland in South Lawrence will be developed into a Johnson County bedroom community of low-density housing.

Urban sprawl destroys more than 100,000 acres of wetlands annually. More federal money is spent on building new roads instead of fixing old roads and finding alternate transportation means. Transportation alternatives to the SLT were not explored by KDOT. Better methods include: 23rd St. and Iowa St. could be improved, more residents could ride bikes, a light rail system could be built, or an accessible bus system between Lawrence, Topeka, Johnson County and Kansas City could be developed.



The U.S. Army Corp. of Engineers approved of the construction of the SLT in December 2002. The final EIS was released. A thirty-day comment period will end on February 17th, 2003. KDOT will then get their permit and could begin building unless something is done!



Resources:

Wetlands Preservation Organization of Haskell
PO BOX 4663 Lawrence, KS 66046
Lawrence Public Library—For a copy of the Final EIS report and related clippings in the Vertical Files
707 Vermont St. Lawrence, KS 66044
www.kssierra.org
www.larryville.com/articles/wetlands.htm
www.ljworld.com/section/slt/story/117908
www.southlawrencetrafficway.org

www.savethewetlands.org

Ⓢ PLEASE COPY AND DISTRIBUTE FREELY

SAVE THE WETLANDS!

Haskell Indian Nations University, The Haskell-Baker Wetlands & The South Lawrence Trafficway

When European settlers arrived, the continental United States was covered with 220 million acres of wetlands. Now, less than half remain. In the late 1700s, there were about 848,000 acres of wetlands in Kansas. By the 1980s almost half of them were drained or filled. The Wetlands of the Wakarusa River Valley once covered 17,800 acres. Now only 670 acres are left and 573 of those are under the control of Baker University. The diversity of wildlife in and near the wetlands greatly exceeds the over 99 percent of dry land in Kansas.



Wetlands are extremely valuable in nature; they act as a buffer zone between land and water. Water picks up dirt and sediment as it travels down the watershed to the rivers and often carries high levels of pollutants from agricultural or urban runoff. In the natural world there are no sewage treatment plants to clean water; nature has her own method for water purification and it is called a wetland. Wetlands purify water, provide flood storage, cycle nutrients, provide habitat for fish and wildlife, and provide opportunities for education and recreation, and they are beautiful. The wetland ecosystem provides a rich environment that hosts physical, chemical and biological processes to purify and filter water. The roots of plants provide a habitat for bacteria and microorganisms that remove impurities from the water as it percolates through the wetland.

The Wetlands of the Wakarusa River Valley (Haskell Baker Wetlands) are home to approximately 219 species of birds, 35 species of amphibians and reptiles, 13 species of fish, 22 species of mammals, and 333 species of plants. This area serves as a feeding and breeding ground for the migratory Monarch butterflies, who munch on milkweed, and for waterfowl—one of the many migratory birds that breed in Canada and set up camp in the wetlands while on their way to Mexico and South America. The Northern Crawfish Frog is an endangered species and its critical habitat is the wetlands. Willow trees in the wetlands are gathered in ceremonies to make sweat lodges.

*The plants within the text are native to the Wetlands of the Wakarusa River Valley. Their names are, in the order they appear, American Elm, Broadleaf Arrowhead, and Giant Ragweed.